

"And when their hues are over, they droop away to
rest,

Unconscious of the penal doom on holy nature's breast,
No pain have they in dying—no shrinking from decay—
Oh! could we but return to earth as easily as they."

C. BOWLES.

December still retains the original name assigned to it in the old Alban and first Roman Calendars adopted by Romulus, in both of which it was the tenth, or last month of the year. Its appellation is composed of *Decem*, ten, and *imber*, a shower.

"Ah! drear is now the season's power,
And dull the lazy footed hour,
To them whose mind the sway confess
Apathetic listlessness;
Nor theirs the body's boon employ,
Nor theirs the mind's sublimer joy.

The close of the year brings with it one great consolation—the days begin to lengthen, and

"The storms of wintery time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded spring encircle all."

Amid all December's sombreness, there are however some lively spots and cheering aspects.—The snipes haunt the marshy ground, the larks congregate and talk to each other—the wagtails twinkle about ponds of water—the thrush occasionally puts forth a plaintive note, as if half afraid of the sound of his own voice, and the robin sings more delightfully than he has done during the other months.

THE HOLLY.

(*Ilex Aquifolium*.)

Class, Tetrandria. Order, Tetragynia. N. O., Illicineæ.

This beautiful evergreen tree, has smooth greyish bark, the leaves are very glossy, the upper ones being entire, and the lower spinous or prickly. This difference in the foliage, has not escaped the notice of poets, as seen in the following beautiful lines written by Southey on the subject:—

"O reader hast thou ever stood to see
The Holly tree?

The eye that contemplates it, well perceives
Its glossy leaves;

Ordered by an intelligence so wise,
As might confound the atheist's sophistries.

"Below a circling fence its leaves are seen,
Wrinkled and keen;

No grazing cattle through their prickly round
Can reach to wound;

But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

"I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralize;

And in this of the Holly tree,
Can emblems see,

Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme,
One which may profit in the after time.